

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Auto Recyclers Encouraged To Remove Mercury Switches

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is encouraging auto recyclers to participate in the National Vehicle Mercury Switch Recovery Program in an effort to safely dispose of mercury, according to Adrian Benz, pollution prevention coordinator for the department.

The safe disposal of mercury is a growing concern across the country. Improper disposal of mercury-containing products can release the toxic substance into the environment. Mercury was used in light switches and antilock braking systems in many vehicles manufactured before model year 2003. During the steel smelting process, mercury can be emitted into the air, where it can cause pollution hazards and human health risks.

The National Vehicle Mercury Switch Recovery Program provides incentives for automobile recyclers and crushers to remove mercury-containing switches from scrap vehicles prior to smelting. Using free containers and shipping, the switches are sent for mercury removal and recycling. Auto recyclers and salvage yards that participate in the recovery program are paid for each mercury light switch or anti-lock brake assembly that is recovered.

The Department of Health has contacted auto salvage yards and scrap metal recycling facilities across the state to encourage them to participate in the national program. So far, 11 auto salvage and scrap metal recycling facilities in North Dakota have enlisted in the national program.

For more information, contact Adrian Benz or Dave Cameron, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.5166 or visit the ELVS website at www.elvsolutions.org.

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